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TAGS: EI PGOV PHUM

SUBJECT: IRISH VIEWS ON BURMA

REF: A. STATE 148530

1B. STATE 146862

1C. STATE 142626

Classified By: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SECTION CHIEF TED PIERCE, REASONS
1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: POLOFF DISCUSSED REF A AND DELIVERED REFS B AND C WITH ISOLDE MOYLAN, REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR ASIA AND OCEANIA, AND CONLETH BRADY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA AND OCEANIA, DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DFA) ON OCTOBER 26, 2007. MOYLAN AND BRADY REAFFIRMED THAT IRELAND REMAINED LARGELY ON THE SAME PAGE WITH USG ON BURMA AND WOULD CONTINUE TO TAKE WHAT ACTIONS IRELAND COULD IN CONCERT WITH THE EU TO ENCOURAGE DEMOCRACY AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) REGARDING THE EU-ASEAN SUMMIT (REF A), MOYLAN SAID THE EU WOULD BE UNWILLING TO EXCLUDE BURMA FROM THE SUMMIT. WHILE IRELAND WOULD HOPE FOR LOWER-LEVEL REPRESENTATION FROM BURMA, SHE NOTED THAT SIMILAR REQUESTS TO ASEAN IN THE PAST HAVE NOT BEEN WELCOMED. ASEAN REPS WOULD BE UNWILLING TO ATTEND IF BURMA WAS NOT REPRESENTED AT A HIGH LEVEL, AND THE EU HAS NEVER BEEN ABLE TO BREAK SUCH BARRIERS WITH ASEAN IN THE PAST, SHE ADDED. IRELAND'S MAIN ROADS TO PROGRESS IN BURMA WILL REMAIN UN ENVOY IBRAHIM GAMBARI'S EFFORTS AND ENCOURAGING BURMA'S NEIGHBORS TO DO MORE, ACCORDING TO MOYLAN. SHE NOTED THAT RECENT SIGNS FROM CHINA HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT, BUT MORE IS NEEDED. THE EU PRESIDENCY WILL NEED TO FIND A CLEAR MANDATE TO RAISE THE ISSUES OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND A TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT IN A SERIOUS WAY OUTSIDE OF THE PLENARY SESSION, MOYLAN SAID, BUT AFFIRMED THAT IRELAND IS FULLY ON BOARD WITH THE USG POSITION.

13. (C) IRISH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS ARE FUNDED MOSTLY THROUGH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS) WHICH OPERATE THEIR OWN CIVIL SOCIETY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND AID ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS ON THE GROUND, ACCORDING TO BRADY. THIS PREVENTS DIRECT BURMESE GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT, BRADY SAID. IRELAND IS SEEKING TO TARGET PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS. THE DFA WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY DIRECT COORDINATION WITH OTHER DONORS IN BURMA, ALTHOUGH BRADY NOTED THAT TROCAIRE DOES COORDINATE WITH OTHER GROUPS. IRISH AID ALSO SUPPORTS UNICEF AND THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM IN BURMA, THE CIVIL SOCIETY FUND AND MULTI-ANNUAL PROGRAM SCHEME, THE VOLUNTARY SERVICE OVERSEAS ORGANIZATION, AND BURMA ACTION IRELAND, WHICH WORKS TO RAISE ASSIST THEIR WORK RAISING AWARENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN BURMA.

14. (C) REGARDING SANCTIONS AGAINST THE BURMESE REGIME (REF B), MOYLAN SAID THAT IRELAND WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE EU AND FOLLOW PROVISIONS FOR EU SANCTIONS AGAINST BURMA, WITH EXEMPTIONS FOR DEMOCRATIZATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS ASSISTANCE. PARTICULAR EU SANCTIONS OF NOTE INCLUDE LOGGING AND THE MINING OF PRECIOUS METALS AND STONES. THE POLITICAL DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN AT THE EU LEVEL, MOYLAN SAID, AND PASSING THE IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION IS THE KEY. THE RECENT PROBLEMS IN

BURMA OFFER A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY TO FOCUS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIZATION, MOYLAN SAID, AND IRELAND WOULD CONTINUE TO ASSIST ADVOCACY GROUPS. THE EU MAY ALSO CONSIDER AN EU SPECIAL ENVOY FOR BURMA, MOYLAN NOTED, ALTHOUGH A DECISION ON THAT ISSUE WOULD ONLY COME IN CONSULTATION WITH UN ENVOY GAMBARI.

15. (C) REGARDING ENCOURAGING SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY IN BURMA (REF C), MOYLAN SAID THAT IRELAND HAS NO DEDICATED ECONOMIC AID PROGRAM TO BURMA, WHICH IS PRECLUDED UNTIL THERE IS "REAL POLITICAL CHANGE" IN THE COUNTRY. THE POLITICAL SITUATION ALSO MAKES IT HARD TO IMPLEMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, MOYLAN SAID, ALTHOUGH IRELAND'S HUMANITARIAN AND CIVIL SOCIETY AID WILL REMAIN AROUND ITS CURRENT LEVEL, CLOSE TO 100,000 EUROS PER YEAR. CONDITIONS FOR IRISH ASSISTANCE TO BURMA ARE SET OUT IN THE 1996 EUROPEAN COUNCIL COMMON POSITION, WHICH PLACES CONDITIONS ON ASSISTANCE TO BURMA WITH EXCEPTIONS FOR THE SUPPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY, POVERTY ALLEVIATION, ASSISTANCE TO NGOS AND CIVIL SOCIETY, AND HEALTH AND EDUCATION.

16. (C) MOYLAN ADDED THAT IRELAND AND THE EU ARE UNLIKELY TO SUPPORT REGIME CHANGE AND EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN ABOUT PERCEIVED U.S. STATEMENTS ON THAT ISSUE. POLOFF REFERRED MOYLAN BACK TO THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT AT UNGA AND OTHER STATEMENTS DETAILED IN REF B FOR A FULL VIEW OF WHERE THE U.S. STANDS ON BURMA.

FOLEY